

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Presently Amended): A material holding implement comprising:  
a material holding member adapted for holding a material, said material holding member being made of a thermoplastic resin,  
wherein said thermoplastic resin is deformable to a material holding configuration conformable to a desirable material configuration at a temperature higher than a certain temperature, and fixable in said material holding configuration to form a material holding region adapted to apply holding forces on a circumference of the material in a using temperature range lower than a the certain temperature, wherein said material holding member comprises a plurality of thermoplastic resin plates, each of said thermoplastic resin plates being radially arranged about said material holding region.

Claim 2 (Canceled)

Claim 3 (Presently Amended): The material holding implement according to Claim 2 1, wherein each of said thermoplastic resin plates has a distal end part facing said material holding region, and wherein each distal end part has a flat plate form.

Claims 4 and 5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Original): A material holding implement comprising:  
a base; and

a plurality of plates arranged about a perimeter of a material holding region, said plurality of plates having a first end mounted to said base and a distal end facing said material holding region,

wherein said plurality of plates are made of a thermoplastic resin, and

wherein said thermoplastic resin is deformable to a material holding configuration at a temperature greater than a predetermined temperature, and fixable to the material holding configuration at a temperature below the predetermined temperature.

Claim 7 (Original): The material holding implement according to Claim 6, wherein each of said plurality of plates are radially arranged about said material holding region.

Claim 8 (Original): The material holding implement according to Claim 7, wherein each distal end part has a flat plate form.

Claims 9-12 (Canceled).